

Elk Point REVIEW

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Tuesday, April 9, 2013

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Community Health Council
Supports Elk Point

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Industry
Adds perspective

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Ready to battle
bush fires
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Vicki Brooker photo

Diamond Jubilee medal presented

Elk Point senior Margaret Modin was presented with a Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee medal by Westlock - St. Paul Member of Parliament Brian Storseth (second from right) on Thursday evening, in recognition of her efforts on behalf of the community. County of St. Paul Reeve Steve Upham (left), Lac La Biche - St. Paul - Two Hills MLA Shayne Saskiw, Mayor Parrish Tung and Town Coun Ron Fraess (in background) added their congratulations to the worthy recipient.

Queen's Diamond Jubilee medal for local senior

By VICKI BROOKER
Review Staff

A bright spot in Thursday's heated Health Care public meeting was a surprise to both the crowd and the recipient of one of 30 Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee medals for the Westlock - St. Paul federal riding.

MP Brian Storseth presented "A very special award to a very special person, who is an inspiration to me and to the whole community, and who is one of the people who keeps this Seniors' Recreation Centre going," Margaret Modin. He added that he had received "numerous nominations" for Modin to receive the prestigious award commemorating Queen Elizabeth's 60th anniversary of her succession to the throne.

Modin, who received a huge ovation from the crowd, was very modest in her acceptance, saying, "One never earns something like this without the help of others along the way."

Elk Point demands answers on RN crisis

Overflow crowd puts Alberta Health Services personnel in the hot seat

By VICKI BROOKER
Review Staff

Residents of Elk Point and surrounding areas packed the Seniors' Recreation Centre to overflowing on Wednesday night for a public meeting on Elk Point Health Care Centre staffing, sending a clear message to Alberta Health Services representatives and federal and provincial governments that it is imperative that the situation be resolved.

Westlock - St. Paul Member of Parliament Brian Storseth and Lac La Biche - St. Paul - Two Hills MLA Shayne Saskiw were joined on stage by Wendy Harrison, vice president of Rural Northeast Operations for Alberta Health Services (AHS) North Zone, Dr. Albert Harmse, Associate Zone Medical Director for Zone 8 and Lorraine Berube, Director of Clinical Operations for Zone 8, as well as County of St. Paul Reeve Steve Upham, Elk Point Mayor Parrish Tung and Coun. Ron Fraess. Town Couns. Bernice Capjack, Dwayne Yaremkevich and Eugene Buck, town

manager Myron Goyan and County Couns. Glen Ockerman and Dwight Dach were also present.

Diana Anderson, Elk Point representative on the Lakeland Community Health Advisory Committee, thanked the AHS representatives for coming to share progress being made on the nursing crisis. "There are so many rumors and concerns that need clarification. Recruitment of nurses in northern Alberta is a concern. This is our community, and we need our acute care beds open."

Anderson briefly outlined the situation, which started last October with a shortage of registered nurses in long term care. Recognizing that long-term care patients "have no place to go," acute care nurses pitched in to help. "They worked really hard to fill the gaps, but overtime hours took their toll, and even with a contract position, they couldn't do it."

On Nov. 23, all acute care beds were closed due to the RN shortage. "AHC was not able to fill the positions of staff

on sick and stress leave," Anderson said. "It was the perfect storm, and it continued without resolution." Over the Christmas week, it was necessary to reduce the emergency department's hours to 8 a.m. to 8 p.m., with 24-hour service restored on Jan. 3.

At the Jan. 31 videoconference with AHS, community representatives asked for a solution to the situation, urging that contract nurses be brought in and making suggestions that staff work in all areas of the facility to maximize their potential, that aggressive recruitment be undertaken to fill vacant positions, and that there be improved communication between the AHS, hospital staff and the community, Anderson said. "There is a real need for communication."

Because Elk Point is a heavy oil boom area, "there is a real need for acute care in this peak time," with work camps coming to the area and hospitals in St. Paul and Bonnyville already over capacity," Anderson added. "It impacts the safety of workers and area residents." The town and county estab-

lished a recruitment and retention committee and committed funding as incentives for incoming nurses, Anderson said. "All the town can do is provide incentives. AHS does the hiring." The committee asked AHS "if we could get contract nurses if we paid the tab, but (North Zone Senior Vice President) Shelley Pusch explained that it was not necessary." The committee received several letters from people who had been affected by the closures, and forwarded them to AHS, she noted. The committee also forwarded suggestions that AHS offer two full-time and one part-time RN positions instead of three part-time, and also that the nurses could work in more than one area of the facility. On Feb. 20, two acute care beds were reopened, "and we sent letters reiterating the need for contract nurses on a short term basis. Summer is coming and there's still a shortage." On March 12, two more beds were opened, with another two on March 26, for a current total of six.

(Continued on Page 2)

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RN crisis

(Continued from Front Page)

Anderson said that the LCHAC had made three recommendations to AHC at their meeting earlier in the day, including one that the management structure of small hospitals be changed to allow those facilities to operate as single units with their own budgets and facility managers to make the decisions and foster teamwork.

Bonnyville Mayor Ernie Isley congratulated "all you people on coming out to show your support. I have always admired the strength of this community. Bonnyville hospital is busting at the seams. Lorraine (Berube) and her colleagues are aware of what is going on, but we have to let the world know. One of the economic drivers of north-east Alberta can't afford healthcare reductions."

Elk Point Chamber of Commerce president Debra McQuinn called

Elk Point "A growing community with a diverse niche," with a large number of seniors, school populations of 307 and 239 students, a daycare used by 40 families and 3,620 vehicles passing through the community on an average day, many of them transporting dangerous goods. One work camp is already going ahead in the area and another is being considered, she noted.

Elk Point Healthcare Centre serves not only Frog Lake and Fishing Lake residents, but also many from Onion Lake, McQuinn noted. "They don't go to Lloydminster because the lineups are hours long."

"How can the government say we are getting the best care available?" McQuinn asked, noting that her stepfather is fighting an infection following an amputation and has to be cared for at home. "That makes (the

crisis) very personal to me." Two little girls she knows are deaf and have kidney issues, she added. "One is having surgery and the parents are going to have to travel back and forth for her treatment."

"As chamber president I have to wonder, how can we say this is 'the right place to be' when the government has chosen to ignore our situation?"

Myrna Fox spoke on behalf of the Health Care Auxiliary, which has "worked diligently and in good faith to contribute to the comfort and wellbeing of patients. We are extremely concerned. How long with the doctors stay if they can't admit patients, and what plan is in place if we have no doctors? When did AHS start advertising for positions and does that advertising include the incentives from the town and county? As an auxiliary, we want definitive answers now."

Donna Chamberland said she has "lost both parents in the existing system, and it is imperative that the system be maintained. We have a granddaughter working in the oil patch in Frog Lake and if she were injured, another half hour to get her to another facility is out of the question."

Chamberland questioned, "What long term plans are we not aware of?" and feels that "supervisors take funding from the grassroots. The administration is top heavy and can topple the health care system."

Superboards "came up with ill-advised plans, like indistinguishable food" on the 21-day menu, Chamberland said. "My mother just stopped eating."

She concluded that "the present health care system is broken and it cannot heal itself. We need commonsense and cooperation between the layers of authority. We had better health care with

our own local boards."

Sandy Kummert spent much of her life in nursing and feels hospitals "need to get back to self government. It is close to impossible to live on part-time wages, and we need 12 beds open. The sooner the beds open, the more we will reduce the possibility of our doctors leaving." She suggested meeting with the oil companies and service companies to look at Workmen's Compensation Board policy regarding the availability of health care, and getting them on board to support the effort "so the hospital stays open and the doctors stay."

Others giving their perspective on the situation included Sherry Shultz, parent of a young man with a severe seizure history, who said, "a fully functioning hospital is what we need today and every day" to ensure care is available at any minute.

Jacquie Deets, who has been providing at-home nursing care for her husband following an amputation, and "had to leave other hospitals because they didn't have enough staffing. Cutting anything is totally ridiculous. With my nursing background, I can help him, but don't let it happen to anybody else."

Levina Ewasiuk asked what the federal and provincial governments were doing to graduate more nurses, and asked AHS what they were doing to make it more attractive to nurse in rural areas.

"We had our own hospital board," Murray Boratynec recalled, "but the government decided it would be better looked after by AHS. The government failed us so many ways, they don't see the day to day needs of the people."

Diane Cole, whose husband suffers from Alzheimer's, told the group that Bonnyville's extended care has extended duty LPNs,

who only had to call in a RN once in eight months. "It's not AHS policy, but you see the government changing policy every day."

Coun. Fraess also recalled the hospital having its own board and budget "before 1995 when the government blew up and shut down hospitals." He urged, "let's get full time people working and let's get an extra one" to fill in as needed.

Sandra Azocar, executive director of Friends of Medicare congratulated Elk Point "for standing up for something so important. This is happening across the province. Enough is enough."

Lisa Palinka who left the long-term care staff after 20 years and is now working in St. Paul said a key to retention is "to look at how it's being run."

Mayor Tung, who chaired the gathering, said the goal of the committee is to keep the health care centre fully operational with adequate staffing and "we want to accomplish some direction to go forward."

Alberta Health Services representatives then had their turn to speak.

Wendy Harrison said she had heard "a lot of questions on local leadership. I would like to encourage those with personal concerns to speak to Lorraine, and she will follow up on them. If you work in health care, bring that to her also."

Harrison said she had "picked out themes," and explained that Alberta Health is the government department, while Alberta Health Services is made up of "the worker bees" of which she is one. Regarding the long-term care vacancies, "we do have ongoing work in recruitment. We have staff that resigned; we had some on medical leave in acute care

and long term care. The acute care staff is back, but long-term care has some vacancies. We will have one more position filled by a nurse starting May 1. The casual component is always posted. We do have some part time, sometimes because of budget and some because they like that kind of work. Regarding the questions about full time, yes we are talking about flexibility, we do need to offer flexibility if they want to do that. We do need extra people to cover the bases, that's why we always have casual positions."

The emergency department was open throughout the nursing shortage, although from Dec. 24 to Jan. 2 it was closed overnight because of the urgent situation. "This is never a decision taken lightly. Ambulance patients were sometimes taken to other hospitals, because ambulance personnel can decide if patients need to be admitted."

Dr. Harmse agreed that there had been an acute care bed shortage since the crisis, which has now improved to six beds. "From a different perspective, bed usage is approximately 50 per cent according to the year's statistics and this is as close as it gets." He added that there were "A low percentage" of severe cases in Elk Point, which has "two wonderful physicians, who can deal with 82 per cent of your problems in their offices."

He agreed, "We still need nurses. We are working on the situation there is extra strain, but there were no nurses available."

Harrison said that clinical front line positions are approved for posting immediately, and that "we in health care want more people to go into nursing. We absolutely are looking for nurses." She added that it "has been a challenge" to advertise the incentives, despite "a lot of conversation with human resources" to have a link to the town's website added to the posting. They have advertised out of province. Four positions are currently advertised, she said, however advertising the vacant head nurse position, because it is a leadership role, must be done by a higher level of administration. "We ask about that position every day."

Bernie Kozicky, a local resident who works in St. Paul Extendercare, told the crowd that the nursing shortage exists across Alberta.

(Continued on Page 3)



UPCOMING AUCTIONS



- **REGULAR LIVESTOCK SALES**
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THE TOWN OF ELK POINT

Notices & Information



DEVELOPMENT APPLICATION

Permit #	Location	Civic	Developer	Development	Decision
13-06	Lot 31 Block 25	5533-49 St.	SJG Contracting	Duplex Unit	April 2/13
	Plan 752 1283				

Any person claiming to be affected by the decision made by the Development Officer may appeal by writing a NOTICE OF APPEAL to the Secretary of the Development Appeal Board, Box 448, Elk Point, Alberta within 14 days from the first publication of this notice giving reasons for the appeal. Such appeal shall be accompanied by a certified cheque or money order in the amount of one hundred fifty (\$150.00) dollars.

Dated this 3rd day of April A.D., 2013

Myron J. Goyan, Development Officer

Firefighters ready for bush, grass fire season

By VICKI BROOKER
Review Staff

Elk Point Volunteer Fire Department is ready for the grass and brush fire season with their brand-new Bush Buggy, purchased with the assistance of a number of corporate donations and the proceeds from last year's Firefighters' Ball.

The bright red Polaris Ranger 6x6 is equipped with not only a 90-gallon water tank, but also with foam and spray attachments, giving firefighters "a good three-quarters to an hour firefighting capacity," says Fire Chief Ken Palamarek.

The department already had a Rapid Attack unit on a 4x4

three-quarter-ton truck, with a 240-gallon water tank, but that unit has limited access in rough or hilly areas, he noted.

"The ATV goes much further into places where access is very limited. It will go into the bush and inaccessible terrain. We're looking forward to using it."

He added that in the past, "we've had incidents where we had to walk in," which severely limits the firefighters' efforts to contain a blaze.

The firefighters are grateful to the community for their contributions toward the new unit, and are confident that more support will be forthcoming at their Ninth Annual Firefighters' Ball,



Elk Point Volunteer Fire Department is very proud of their bright red Ranger 6 x 6, equipped with water and foam tanks and ready to roll to inaccessible locations when the grass and brush fire season arrives.

slated for May 4.

Organizing committee member Andrew Morin reports that the evening will include a catered meal, a silent auction and dancing to a live band, Hiway 55. This year, the event will be held in the Elk Point Arts and Leisure Centre for the first time, and the firefighters are looking forward to good attendance and another successful event.

Tickets are available from the firefighters.

RN crisis

(Continued from Page 2)

"Everyone is short. We need the schools; we need people coming into the field. Getting nurses from overseas is a long procedure. There are other issues, but the shortage of nurses is a tough one."

MP Brian Storseth thanked the AHS staff for attending and the recruitment and retention committee for setting up the meeting. "I'm proud to work with this group." He added he was also proud of the federal government, who sent \$1.98 billion to Alberta in transfer payments when he was first elected and now sends \$4 billion. "When the Health Care Accord comes due, Alberta will be the only province to get more out of this deal. We are going to move forward and doctors and nurses who will stay will have a reduction in their student loans."

Health care is "An issue across rural ridings. The richest province in the richest country in the world shouldn't have to worry about it. We need Alberta Health Care to tell us what we need to

do to fix it. We need the decision makers to tell us and that won't happen until they come here. We need the minister to come here, but I still haven't gotten a return phone call from his office. We need to separate the issues that can be answered tonight from the others."

"It's heartwarming to see so many people here," MLA Shayne Saskiw said. "This is a crisis that has been going on for four months, a disaster. Eighty-two per cent can be handled by local doctors, but what about the other 18? Half the time, we need more than six beds. Alberta spends more on health care and is getting the worst results. The Superboard doesn't work. They have an 80-page work chart, with

layer after layer. It takes six layers to get a light bulb changed. There is a lot of waste in the system that should be spent on the front line. We have to make the health minister accountable. AHS is giving themselves bonuses, but it's not their fault, it's the system."

Saskiw said that until he had exhausted other avenues, "I wanted to do the right thing here. I did a lot of work with the town and county, and this isn't their job. Change starts right here. I will bring this forward in the legislature next week that we need to go back to local decision making."

Alberta currently has 1,122 posted positions for registered nurses, 155 of them in this zone.

THANK YOU

ELK POINT VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT

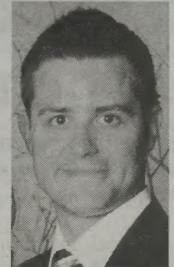
Wishes to thank the following donors for their contributions toward the purchase of a Bush Buggy for fighting grass and bush fires in hard-to-reach locations:

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Capsule Comments

by Your Natural Choice Apple Drugs pharmacist, Chris Letawsky



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- Our sense of taste gradually becomes less acute after the age of 60. However taste can be affected by dental disease, upper respiratory tract infections and smoking. Some drugs may cause changes in taste as well. Let our pharmacists know if you suspect this is happening to you and we will check it for you.
- The maximum amount of time children should spend in front of a screen daily is two hours. Unfortunately, Canadian kids are spending an average of 7-8 hours daily in front of the screens of computers, TVs and other electronic devices. Studies show that 46% of Canadian kids get 3 hours or less of active play per week. And that includes weekends. Not good for future good health.
- Some people order prescription drugs online from what may appear to be legitimate pharmacies but are really unlicensed pharmacies selling illegal and often counterfeit medicines. Play it safe. Buy your medicines from people you can trust.
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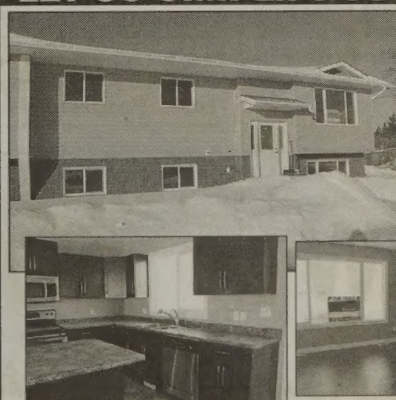
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EDITORIAL

Not this again!

If space had permitted, a rerun of an editorial from our Feb. 7, 1995 issue would have not have been out of place, as it dealt with the threatened loss of acute care hospital beds and around-the-clock emergency service.

At that time, it was because of government belt tightening, now it is because Alberta appears to have a province-wide absence of nurses. Could this be a far reaching effect of the 1995 deficit reduction efforts?

Seniors, young families, resource industry workers and even tourists were listed as potential casualties of the lack of health services from those cutbacks. We heard all those listed again at last week's meeting.

We survived the 1995 round, and we hope that a cure is discovered in time to save Elk Point once again.

WAY BACK WHEN...

Strike break, heavy load

HERE'S THE NEWS THAT MADE THE HEADLINES OF THE LAKELAND REVIEW AND ELK POINT REVIEW FOR THE WEEK OF APRIL 9 IN...

1988

A break in the month-long teachers' strike came when teachers in the North Central East region 76 per cent in favour of accepting a proposal put forward by Deputy Labour Minister Clint Mellors. Stoney Lake Stampede Association announced that this year's event would feature that area's first-ever rodeo queen competition.

1993

Elk Point's curling season wound up, with first place in the Men's A division going to Don Anderson's rink, first in the Men's B going to the Steve Penz rink, Lyle Yerama skipping the Mixed A, Art Britton the Mixed B, and Denis Jasinsky the Junior Team of the Year. The Community Services building and the Elk Point Recreation Park were victimized by vandals, with signs shot down, windows broken and other damage.

1998

As Elk Point Pioneer Circle celebrated 25 years, Margaret Modin likened the formation of the group to a team of horses pulling a heavy load, adding, "Many have put on the harness and made this happen." Elk Point Chamber of Commerce and their new president, John Yettaw, were off to a good start with plans for a general cleanup of the downtown area set to coincide with Pitch In Canada Week.

2003

Provincial Elks president Noel Pell visited Elk Point and served as installing secretary as District Deputy Roger Hall installed Exalted Ruler Allan Berg and his officers for the coming year. Guest speaker Bob Scott, general manager of St. Paul and District Co-op, urged the chamber of commerce to defend their businesses against the competition of big box stores by giving residents "a reason to shop here" and by keeping prices close enough to be considered competitive.

2008

Eighteen years of service to the Elk Point Volunteer Fire Department by Lyle Frisby was honoured with the presentation of a plaque by MLA Ray Danyluk, who praised the dedication of the department at the fifth annual Firefighters' Ball. The Buffalo Trail barrel racers celebrated the end of another winter series with the presentation of trophies, with Ruby Braconnier winning the Open Barrels saddle and Caitlyn Brooks the Youth High Point award.



GUEST COLUMN

Hard to learn

Speaking of the English language, did you know that the English language can be hard to learn? If English is your only language, this question may be a silly one for you to answer. In Elk Point, over the last little while I have noticed there are more people from other cultures and languages that seem to be choosing Elk Point as a place to live. Hence, I am wondering how they are feeling about using the English language with those of us who only use the English language in our conversations. Are they confused sometimes? Let us say: "Yes, the English language can be confusing!" I will now give twenty examples of words spelled the same but are pronounced differently.



deanna
EASTHOPE
from the FCSS desk

The bandage was wound around the wound.
The farm was used to produce produce.
The dump was so full that it had to refuse more refuse.
We must polish the Polish furniture.
He could lead if he would get the lead out.
The soldier decided to desert his dessert in the desert.
Since there is no time like the present, he thought it was time to present the present.
A bass was painted on the head of the bass drum.
When shot at, the dove dove into the bushes.
I did not object to the object.
The insurance was invalid for the invalid.
There was a row among the oarsmen about how to row.
They were too close to the door to close it.
The buck does funny things when the does are present.
A seamstress and a sewer fell down into a sewer line.
To help with planting, the farmer taught his sow to sow.
The wind was too strong to wind the sail.

After a number of injections my jaw got number. Upon seeing the tear in the painting I shed a tear. I had to subject the subject to a series of tests. Word usage confusion continues. All of these examples just verify that a person needs to be here for awhile, to fully understand the English language usage. When something is difficult for someone, it reminds me of the star thrower story. Once upon a time, there was a wise man, who used to go to the ocean to do his writing. He had the habit of walking along the beach before he began his work. One day he was walking along the shore; as he looked down the beach, he saw a human figure moving like a dancer. He smiled to himself to think of someone who would dance to the day. So he began to walk faster to catch up. As he got closer, he saw that it was a young man and the young man wasn't dancing, but instead, he was reaching down to the shore, picking up something and very gently throwing it into the ocean. As he got closer he called out, "Good morning! What are you doing?" The young man paused, looked up and replied, "Throwing Starfish into the ocean." "I guess I should have asked; why are you throwing Starfish into the ocean?" "The sun is up and the tide is going out and if I don't throw them in they'll die." "But young man, don't you realize that there are miles and miles of beach and Starfish all along it, you can't possibly make a difference!" The young man listened politely, then bent down, picked up another Starfish and threw it into the sea, past the breaking waves. "It made a difference for that one." I thought of this story because I think we can liken it to our people who are now in Elk Point trying to use our English language which is different to them. If we take the time to be patient and help them with their English word usage, it will make a difference to them. Hard to learn will become comfortable to learn because of their interaction with us.

The Elk Point Review publishes a variety of opinions as a contribution to debate on matters of public concern. Unsigned editorials express the view of this newspaper's editorial board which includes the Publisher and the Editor. Signed pieces express the view of the individual writer.

ELK POINT REVIEW

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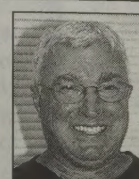
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Vicki Brooker
EDITOR



Melanie McRae
SALES
FRONT DESK

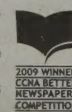


Doug Bassett
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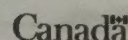
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We acknowledge the financial support of the Government of Canada through the Canada Periodical Fund (CPF) for our publishing activities.



VIEWPOINT

Oilfield company needs health centre

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

RE: Letter of Support for the Continuation of a Fully Operation of Elk Point Health Centre

Shamrock Valley Enterprises has proudly been part of the Elk Point community for the past 28 years. Being among the largest employers in the community, we employ 150 to 200 people year round. Presently, we have over 50 employees under the age of 50...that have moved to Elk Point over the past 2 years. Many of these employees have relocated their families to Elk Point, with the expectation of having access to emergency medical facilities. In our already competitive job market, we do not need another reason for people not to come to our community.

Elk Point is a dynamic and growing community...based in the centre of one of the most highly active, high risk oil and gas sectors in the province. As an employer in the Oil and Gas community, Shamrock Valley Enterprises has utilized the Elk Point Health Centre on multiple occasions. On average our company has utilized the Elk Point Health Centre about 25 times a year. Whether it is minor cuts, scrapes, heat exhaustion, x-rays, head injuries, swelling, burns, sprains or minor fractures, we COUNT on the medical services provided within the community of Elk Point to meet our needs.

The closure of the Elk Point Health Centre's acute care and emergency services would immediately create the need for on-site medical responders at each work site, in order to meet the "First Aid Requirements for High Hazard Work" of the OH&S Acts' codes and regulations. Currently, we do not require these medical services at our work sites every day, because the Elk Point Health Centre is located right in our community!

Shamrock Valley Enterprises STRONGLY supports the continued operation of the Elk Point Health Centre to its fullest extent. It would be crippling to business, industry and to the families we employ to lose these important services from our growing community.

Shamrock Valley Enterprises believes that sending our patients to other health care facilities is not the solution. These facilities are already over-capacity with long wait times. Closing our facility will only further aggravate this issue. We have the physical structure...complete with a lab, x-ray and ER facilities... let's use it. We firmly believe the closing of our facility will put lives at risk. We would like to ask Alberta Health Services.... what's a life worth?

Sincerely,
Shamrock Valley Enterprises Ltd.
Elk Point, AB

By VICKI BROOKER
Review Staff

The Lakeland Community Health Advisory Council (LCHAC) heard presentations from the Elk Point Interagency Health Committee and Elk Point Town Council at last Thursday's meeting Elk Point. The meeting had originally been planned for March 21 in St. Paul but was rescheduled due to severe weather.

Interagency Health Committee chair Margaret Modin said the committee is "gravely concerned" with the staffing situation at Elk Point Healthcare Centre that resulted in complete closure of acute care beds between Nov. 23 and Feb. 20 and the reduction of emergency department hours. Modin said this put stress on not only our community but also the hospitals in St. Paul and Bonnyville, where redirected patients faced long waits for medical care and put local residents at risk.

She listed several incidents, including a dehydrated woman who was airlifted to Edmonton because she could not receive timely care, a person on blood thinners who was injured in a fall and a person who had to be taken care of at home after an amputation.

"The evidence is very clear that our doctors need to be able to admit patients. The town and county offered funding toward the cost of contract nurses and were turned down. Our committee is asking for immediate action to be taken," "We try to keep all the services running, but no doubt we sometimes have staffing shortages," Wendy Harrison, vice president of Rural Northeast Operations for Alberta Health Services North Zone, said.

LCHAC supports IHC, town's presentations

"There is a process we follow. When we are short, people work overtime and the increased difficulty with short staffing has caused more and more reliance on contract nurses." Closing beds, she added, "is never a step we take lightly."

Dr. Albert Harmse, Associate Zone Medical Director for Zone 8, who works closely with Harrison, responded to a question regarding advising the public of the closure. He said there was "all kinds of notice to the doctors. Activity had to stop because of the unavailability of nurses. From Dec. 24 to Jan. 2, the emergency department was closed for 12 hours a day and there were big billboard signs. Otherwise the site has been open."

Harrison added that the information was not put in the local paper because of the short time frame, and agreed that it is very important to notify the public, "but these were exceptional circumstances. It was a very challenging time."

Elk Point Deputy Mayor Bernice Capjack also spoke on the acute care closure and said it is "critical that the healthcare centre be kept in full operation. Frog Lake First Nations has 3,000-plus population that depends on Elk Point and we are in the middle of a heavy oil boom with camps moving in. What if there is an accident?"

She noted that the town and the County of St. Paul had established a \$65,000 fund and offered to pay the contract nurses, a situation that would be cost neutral to Alberta Health Services, but "were told in a letter from North Zone Senior Vice President Shelley Pusch that it was not necessary. The big question is, why not?" She suggested allowing staff to work in all areas

of the hospital and a change in management structure for rural hospitals as potential solutions for the nursing shortage.

Capjack noted that as of that day, six beds were open, "and we're asking that AHS address the crisis before the holiday season begins."

LCHAC member Pat Palechuk of Smoky Lake moved that the committee accept and support the presentations by the Interagency Health Committee and the Town of Elk Point and that the presentations be forwarded to Alberta Health Services Board Chair Steven Lockwood and Minister of Health and Wellness Fred Horne.

Similar staffing shortages are presenting a challenge in Smoky Lake, "but there is no plan to change services," Harrison reported in answer to a question from County of Smoky Lake Coun. Laurie Danyluk. "We're doing a lot of recruiting there, and there have been lots of talks, extra shifts and behind-the-scenes shuffling. There is the potential to close some of the beds temporarily, because we're not doing the greatest job of filling positions quickly."

Harrison noted that adjusting services is "a way of working through difficult times," and assured Danyluk that closing the emergency department "is not even on our radar. I would like to put your mind at ease."

Later in the meeting, Palechuk was elected by acclamation as the new chair of the LCHAC, succeeding Marvin Fyten of Lac La Biche, with James Lamouche of St. Paul also elected by acclamation to the vice-chair position formerly held by Palechuk.

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Friends of the Forts on the hunt for event volunteers

By VICKI BROOKER
Review Staff

The Friends of Fort George and Buckingham House are once more in search of volunteers to organize, supervise and carry out the multitude of details that are part of the Riverland Adventure Challenge.

The annual event, which involves a canoe journey from the Elk Point river campsite to the landing at the foot of the historic site, a run through the rugged terrain across the original fort sites and a bike ride on a nearby county road, attracts a good crowd of adventurous teams each year, and also brings a crowd of spectators to the Forts to cheer the teams on as they cross the finish line.

The Friends are currently looking for one or more volunteers who can take registrations, search out sponsors and organize the day's events. The Friends traditionally take care of serving the lunch that welcomes the teams as they complete the three-phase event, and the provincial historic site's interpretive staff organizes a series of activities that challenge participants to show off such fur trade era skills as log sawing and bannock eating to wind up the event.

Anyone who would like to help with the planning or on the day of the event, from race timers to directing traffic in the parking lot to helping serve lunch, is invited to leave their name with Daphne Schnurer at 780-724-3737 weekdays.

The Riverland Challenge, slated for Saturday, May 25, provided enough volunteers are found, is the first major event of the season for Fort George and Buckingham House Historic Site, which opens for the season on May 15.

Programming coordinator Ross

Stromberg told the Friends last week that funding was in place for this year's operation, and he was currently interviewing staff, some of whom are returning for a second year of leading tours and welcoming visitors to the site.

Stromberg was excited to report that upgrades are being made to the interpretive centre's lobby area, with a brand new reception desk, and to the staff's kitchenette area.

He also told the Friends that bookings are now coming in for visits by school groups, as the Forts are a popular destination during the final weeks of the school year, and a great way for youngsters to find out about Alberta's fur trade history of two centuries ago.

Plans are already underway for the Forts' other major events.

This year, the midsummer craft sale has a new and exciting focus as the "Bears and Berries Festival" on Saturday, July 20. That day will include a Teddy Bears' Picnic for the youngsters, a craft sale with a special emphasis on items that involve either part of the theme, and of course, mouth-watering saskatoon pie.

The final event of the season will be the annual Forts des Prairies Jamboree, which always brings a great lineup of homegrown entertainment from across northeast Alberta to play and sing for an appreciative crowd. This year's jamboree will be held on August 25, just a week before the site closes for the season on Labour Day.

Mark your calendar now and plan to visit the twin 221-year-old fur trade fort sites where the Elk Point area's earliest history comes to life in its original setting.



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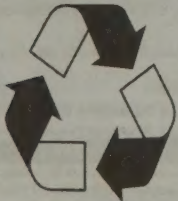
Vicki Brooker photos

Springtime in rural Alberta

Spring in rural Alberta brings a population explosion to many barnyards as calves arrive at any hour of the day or night. These youngsters enjoy the warm afternoon sun in the Lindbergh area, with one “baby-sitter cow” keeping an eye on the little ones while their mothers enjoy their lunch in the background. Abundant snowfall this winter should provide lush pasture in a few weeks’ time, which will be a welcome change of diet from the winter’s hay bales for the livestock, who are probably just as eager as their owners for the snow to disappear.



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Residents happy with library

By VICKI BROOKER
Review Staff

Elk Point Municipal Library has released the results of the 2012 survey of patrons, which shows the facility fulfills or exceeds the expectations of its users.

Out of 66 respondents, 54 gave the library top marks for knowledgeable and helpful staff, 56 placed both the library building itself and its collection of materials in the top two levels of satisfaction and 60 respondents placed their overall satisfaction in those same two levels. While 16 said the computer and electronic resource services did not apply to them, another 33 marked these as excellent, and 54 found the hours of operation either excellent or very good. Sixty-one respondents found the library met their current information needs.

A surprising finding of the survey was that only 26 of the respondents had attended any of the programming provided by the library. Asked about the programs they had attended and invited to share ideas for future programming, parents heaped praise on the after-school and summer programs for children. Adults noted they had attended further education classes, teas, meetings and the knitting group, with one respondent stating, "I am grateful for this facility being available for exercise sessions.

The use of the building could be extended to host more community events. An excellent community resource – could be a bigger size, though."

Another respondent seconded that motion, noting, "A bigger facility is needed to host and accommodate associated programs," while a third said the library needed "More floor space. Elk Point is growing. This building is storing in an external shack," while yet another said, "As there is no place in town for groups to meet, it would be nice to build on a larger room and enlarge the library at some future time.

Other comments suggested the facility be made more wheelchair and walker-friendly, that it should have better sidewalks and that a handicapped parking spot would be an asset.

The staff received many compliments, from "very friendly and always happy to help if you have questions" to "Excellent service and a very efficient and knowledgeable staff – simply super" and "Keep the wonderful staff that you have."

Suggestions for improvement included listing upcoming events in the newspaper or on mailbox flyers and that evening programming on such topics as e-readers and computer research would be appreciated.

National award for Review

By VICKI BROOKER
Review Staff

The Elk Point Review is proud to announce that we have been awarded second place for front page in the Canadian Community Newspapers Better Newspapers competition's General Excellence section for newspapers with a circulation of up to 1,249.

The St. Paul Journal received two awards with Janani Whitfield placing first in the Best News Story category and Janice Huser first in the Best Photo Essay, both in the 3,999 and under category.

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ALL ROUND EMPLOYEE required for tavern and cooking in small town friendly hotel. Full-time, room included. Call Marg 403-857-9134.

ATTENTION SEMI Operators! Looking to downsize? Haul RVs from USA to western Canada! 5-6 day round trip. Looking for 1 ton O/O & 3 ton drivers. 1-866-736-6483; www.speedwaymovingsystems.com.

BINDERY OPERATOR for Muller Saddle Stitcher, Kansas. Experience preferred. Willing to train the right candidate. Full-time. Up to \$23/hour. Benefits. Email: hr@starpres.ca. Wainwright, Alberta.

CENTRAL PEACE Natural Gas Co-op Ltd. requires full-time Gas Utility Operator. Experience, safety tickets an asset. Clean valid driver's licence required. Forward resume to: cpngc@telusplanet.net. Fax 780-864-2044. Mail: Box 119, Spirit River, TOH 3G0.

EXCLUSIVE Finning/Caterpillar Mechanic training. GPRC Fairview Campus. High school diploma. \$1000. entrance scholarship. Paid practicum with Finning. Write apprenticeship exams. On-campus residences. 1-888-999-7882; www.gprc.ab.ca/fairview.

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FLAGSTAFF COUNTY, Sedgewick, Alberta requires a full-time Grader Operator. Fax/email resume by 11 a.m., April 15/13. Attention: Gary Longhe 780-390-0310 (cell); 780-384-3635 (fax). Email: glonghe@flagstaff.ab.ca.

FULL-TIME MEAT MANAGER required at Sobey's in Olds, Alberta. 40 hours per week. Benefits. Fax resume to 1-403-556-8652.

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NOW LOCATED in Drayton Valley. BREKKAAS Vacuum & Tank Ltd. Wanted Class 1 & 3 Drivers, Super Heater Operators with all valid tickets. Top wages, excellent benefits. Please forward resume to: Email: dv@brekkaas.com. Phone 780-621-3953. Fax 780-621-3959.

POSITIONS REQUIRED for new outdoor aquatic centre in Spirit River, Alberta. Pool Manager, Lifeguards; <http://townofspiritrivier.ca>. Contact Bonnie at 780-864-3998.

PYRAMID CORPORATION, is now hiring! Instrument Technicians and Electricians for various sites across Alberta. Send resume to: hr@pyramidcorporation.com or fax 780-955-HIRE.

WANTED - Water & Vacuum Truck Operators. Class 3 w/Q-endorsement, H2S, First Aid, PST, CSTS. Mechanically inclined. Day-rate benefits. Fax 403-934-3487. Email: reception@mjswaterhauling.com.

3010. Auctions

75 QUARTERS LAND, Oyen, Alberta - Ritchie Bros Unreserved Auction. 1HQ, 30 Parcels Farmland, 6 Parcels Grazing Lease, \$37,300 Surface Lease Revenue. Jerry Hodge 780-706-6652; rbauction.com/realstate.

BUD HAYNES Antique Auction. Saturday, April 20 at 11 a.m., Red Deer, Estate Laurie Alho of Lethbridge. Over 40 radios, furniture & furnishings. Phone 403-347-5855; www.budhaynesauctions.com.

COLLECTOR CAR Auction. 3rd Annual Edmonton Motor Show Classic Car Auction. April 19 - 21, Edmonton Expo Centre. Over 75,000 spectators. Consign today. 1-888-296-0528 ext. 102; EGautions.com.

COLLECTOR CAR Auction! 6th Annual Calgary Collector Car Auction, May 10 - 11, Grey Eagle Casino. Over 100 pieces of memorabilia selling No Reserve. All makes & models welcome. Consign today 1-888-296-0528 ext. 102; EGautions.com.

MEIER - 2 DAY Classic Car & Truck Auction. Saturday & Sunday, May 4 & 5, 11 a.m. Both days, 6016 - 72A Ave., Edmonton. 150 Classics. Consign today, call 780-440-1860.

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3210. Misc. For Sale

HOME PHONE Reconnect. Toll free 1-866-287-1348. Cell phone accessories catalogue. Everyone welcome to shop online at www.homephonereconnect.ca. Like us on Facebook.

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3220. Misc. Wanted

FAST TRACK to Parts and Materials Technician. 36 week program at GPRC Fairview Campus includes work practicum. Challenge 1st and 2nd period apprenticeship exams in both trades. 1-888-999-7882; www.gprc.ab.ca/fairview.

OFFICE ADMINISTRATION Specialty Programs in Oil and Gas, Dental, Bookkeeping, Legal Secretary. GPRC, Grande Prairie campus. Or take Microcomputer Office Specialist Diploma online. 1-888-539-4774; www.gprc.ab.ca.

4005. Cattle

2 YR OLD CHAROLAIS bulls for sale. Red & white, mostly polled. 780-726-2579

4040. Livestock

FOR SALE SALEERS BULLS Purebred tan, red & white yearling bulls. Very quiet & easy calving. Scattered Spruce Sales 780-768-2284.

LOVE ANIMALS - Love your career as an Animal Health Technologist. Treat large and companion animals. On campus full working farm and residences. 1-888-999-7882; www.gprc.ab.ca/fairview.

4310. Grain/Feed/Hay

DEALERS WANTED: Hannas Deals need agents to sell alfalfa, clovers and grasses plus hay, pasture, turf, native and reclamation mixtures. Contact Esther 1-800-661-1529 or esther@hannasdeals.com.

HEATED CANOLA buying or Green, Heated or Springthashed Canola. Buying: oats, barley, wheat & peas for feed. Buying damaged or offgrade grain. "On Farm Pickup" Western Feed & Grain, 1-877-250-5252.

4310. Grain/Feed/Hay

Oats and Wheat Wanted Any condition, dry wet or heated. On farm pick-up. Immediate payment. Toll free 1-866-349-2056

5003. Real Estate Misc.

ELINOR LAKE RESORT. 2.5 hours NE Edmonton. Spring Sale, fully serviced lake lots reduced by 15% May 17-31, 2013. Suitable for cabin/house, RV or investment. 1-877-623-3990; elinorlakeresort.com.

5300. Manuf. Homes - Sale

ALBERTA CUSTOM Homes "Open House" Spring Sale. April 6 - 26. Dealer and factory incentives available. Don't miss out. Inquire at 1-800-347-5590. **COMMONWEALTH HOMES** invites you to our "Open House" April 6 - 21. Special purchase incentives. Inquire at www.commonwealthhomes.com. 1-800-341-6675.

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6300. Motorcycles

THE ONE - THE ONLY - The One and Only in Canada! Only Authorized Harley Davidson Technician Program at GPRC Fairview Campus. On-campus residences. 1-888-999-7882; www.gprc.ab.ca/fairview.

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7245. Misc. Services

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Water Well Drilling - Within 150 miles of Edmonton, Red Deer, Calgary (New Government water well grant starts April 1/13) Time Payment Plan O.A.C. for water wells and water treatment **1-800-BIG IRON (244-4766)**

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BIG IRON Drilling Ltd. View our 29 patented and patent pending inventions online at www.1800bigiron.com

9005. Personals

DATING SERVICE. Long-term/short-term relationships. Free to try! 1-877-297-9883. Live intimate conversation, Call #7878 or 1-888-534-6984. Live on1 Call (1-866-972-7366); www.RemoveYourRecord.com

8550. Landscaping

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7999. Too Late To Classify

Area farmers hope for profitable growing season amid near record crop prices

SUBMITTED BY AGRICULTURE FINANCIAL SERVICES CORPORATION

Crop Insurance deadline April 30

Near record crop prices are fuelling the possibility of a profitable growing season as Elk Point-area farmers prepare for spring seeding.

"With canola fluctuating around \$14.50 per bushel and barley averaging about \$5.30 in March, farmers are hoping the weather cooperates better this year – so they can cash in on these high prices with bumper crops," says Lorelei Hulston, Provincial Insurance Manager for Agriculture Financial Services Corporation (AFSC), which administers crop insurance in Alberta on behalf of the provincial and federal governments.

"Producers would like to avoid the disappointment

of last year," says Hulston. "Prices were high and the growing season looked promising. Then came a series of unexpected weather and disease issues that left many with below average yields and crop insurance claims."

Close to \$532 million was paid out through crop insurance across Alberta last year, including the County of St. Paul. Claims were triggered by several factors including widespread hail, lack of moisture, and heat stress caused by hot July weather. "Many canola fields were hit by an unexpected disease called aster yellows. Diseases like sclerotinia and insects like army cutworms also became a problem," says Hulston.

'Mother Nature is in Control'

"It still ended up being a decent year financially for many – thanks to high grain prices – but it was far from what they'd hoped for," says Hulston. "With crop prices even higher this spring, there's a lot of value farmers will want to protect this year," she adds, reminding producers of the upcoming April 30 deadline to apply for crop insurance in Alberta.

Whether prices remain at near record highs – allowing farmers to cash in once they harvest crops this fall – depends mainly on the weather, says Charlie Pearson, a provincial crop market analyst with Alberta Agriculture and Rural Development. "Mother Nature is in control."

Grain prices could drop 10 to 20 per cent

Pearson explains today's high prices were created by last year's drought in the U.S., Russia, Ukraine, and South America – leaving tight corn and oilseed supplies worldwide. "If the world gets good weather and decent crops, we'll have larger grain supplies this fall – causing prices to drop 10 to 20 per cent depending on how much grain is harvested," he predicts. "But if drought conditions continue in these major grain growing regions of the world and supplies tighten further, prices could climb higher."

While he expects grain prices will soften this fall, Pearson says strong demand for meat and cooking oil in China and the U.S. ethanol policy should keep prices

"historically high and profitable for most producers."

SPE protects high prices

"However, we'll probably see wild price swings. Historically there's more market volatility when prices are high," he explains. "It's a good year for farmers to consider locking in some of the profitable prices being forecast with a tool like the Spring Price Endorsement (SPE)." The SPE is an optional crop insurance rider that compensates farmers if prices drop 10 to 50 per cent between spring and fall on harvested crops.

If grain prices climb higher – by 10 to 50 per cent – a built-in crop insurance feature called the Variable Price Benefit (VPB) insures farmers at the higher price if their crop fails, adds Hulston. The VPB paid out nearly \$108 million in 2012 – a record amount – when prices jumped by up to 50 per cent on some crops between spring and fall.

Hulston expects interest in the SPE will rise this year as producers look for ways to protect against falling prices, but she says the production guarantee crop insurance provides will once again be the key reason farmers insure as much as 14 million acres of Alberta cropland this spring.

Getting enough moisture is a concern

Eric Anderson operates Sugarloaf Charolais and grows 1,200 acres of canola and cereals southwest of Elk Point near Minburn with his family. While he hopes grain prices stay strong, Anderson says he's most concerned about other risks that could impact his crops this year.

"Getting enough moisture is a big concern," says Anderson, explaining that's why he always takes crop insurance. He may add the SPE this spring because he thinks grain prices might fall. He'll also be watching closely for bertha armyworms after the insects infested his fields last year and helped reduce his canola yields by 20 per cent. "They're on a two or three-year cycle," says Anderson, noting his soil moisture looks about average so far thanks to lots of snow this winter.

All-risk coverage

Like Anderson, most farmers enrolled in crop insurance take the highest coverage levels – insuring 70 to 80 per cent of their average crop yield – because it's impossible to predict what might impact their crops each year, says Hulston. The majority also take the Hail Endorsement rider, she says, noting about 60 per cent of crop insurance premiums are subsidized by government. "It's all-risk coverage that insures everything from drought and hail to frost, flooding, insects, wind, disease, and wildlife."

As producers fill out their crop insurance forms, Hulston reminds them to declare all acres they intend to seed this year – whether they plan to insure them or not – to be eligible for the Unseeded Acreage and Reseeding Benefits if those fields become flooded.

Farmers can also Auto-Elect Straight Hail Insurance coverage at a 2 per cent discount if they choose that option with their crop insurance before April 30. And producers wishing to defer claim payments until the next calendar year are urged to notify AFSC as soon as possible, because once claim cheques are issued, payments can no longer be deferred. Producers with questions about crop insurance can contact their local AFSC District Office or the AFSC Call Centre at 1-877-899-AFSC (2372) before the April 30 deadline.

THE ELK POINT SOCCER ASSOCIATION

will be having a

REGISTRATION NIGHT AND AGM

Wednesday, April 10, 2013

AT THE A.G. ROSS ARENA
IN THE HORIZON ROOM

Registration – 5:00 p.m.

AGM Meeting – 7:00 p.m.

For further info. please contact:

Tracy Jamieson at 780-645-8286
or email: jamiesontl@hotmail.ca

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